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NEWS-LETTER

OUT OF SCHOOL

UNIVERSITIES CONGRESS

PROTESTANT OPPOSITION TO AMSTERDAM

SUPPLEMENT

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MODERN WORLD VIEW—IV
BY
H. A. HODGES

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION BOOK LIBRARY

THE EDITOR is at Amsterdam and we are grateful to Mr. Walter James, Deputy Editor of a leading educational journal and a member of our Editorial Board, for these comments on two recent events in the educational world.

OUT OF SCHOOL

Education is not just something that happens at school and so there is nothing remarkable in the second report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) being called *Out of School*,[1] and dealing with what the child does or ought to be able to do after 4 o'clock, at the week-end, and in the holidays.

Like most reports it has an air of platitude, though if all it recommended could be carried into effect the Council's "confidence in fun as a powerful educational agent" would probably be justified. From 5–7 the child's curiosity is strong; it wants to find out and to make—"swords, aeroplanes, ships and many other objects can be fashioned out of odd pieces of wood if a small saw and light hammer can be provided". "He gets greater enjoyment from the simplest of materials . . . but he must have space to experiment, space to indulge in his imaginative play, and space to run, jump, skip, climb and enjoy the hundred and one physical activities natural to him."

[1] H.M. Stationery Office, 1s.

No greatly different needs are suggested in the report fo the 7–11s, but " at about the age of eleven a marked chang in the child's interests is often to be seen ". The " gang spirit forms, and without lawful outlets it is now that anti social tendencies become dangerous.

Having run through the ages, the Council puts to itsel the question which will probably have jumped to som readers' minds : " Why can't you leave the child some tim to himself ? He has to go to school and now you want hir to go to a club or a play centre in the evening. Is he to hav no time at home ? " But no one can say that the Counc has forgotten the home and parents. If there is a constantl recurring thought in the report it is that " The last thing w would want to do is to minimize the importance of the hom in a child's development ". Some homes, however, ar over-crowded ; more still have no room for hobbies hardly any boast playgrounds. So for children to have the fling many suggestions are made—from one flat in a bloc being set aside for their use, to someone being stationed on village green to coach " the young would-be cricketers an footballers ". Camps, libraries, swimming baths, an children's concerts through the Arts Council are all thoug of. Nor are the parents left out ; they, or many of then " would be grateful for experienced guidance in arriving a truer understanding of the interests of their children " an " parents' courses and demonstrations " ought to arranged by the local education authorities.

The Council recommends so much of what is desirab that it seems unkind to call attention to the main difficult which is whether its recommendations are not yet anoth blank cheque on an already overdrawn national accoun Perhaps it does not seem to ask much. Only for the Minist of Education to " grant-aid " voluntary bodies working f out-of-school interests on the same terms as it does the You Service. Only for " Out of School Committees " to formed out of already existing local education committe But there is a sinister ring, from the standpoint of t national economy, in the recommendation that " Both pa and unpaid workers, some whole-time and some part-tin

should take part in the work. Great care should be exercised in the choice of all workers." It is true that this sort of work is not much use unless it is well done. But it is rather daunting at this particular time to have still another demand for talented man-power out of a strictly limited supply.

Are we trying to do too many good things at a bad time? Education has already asked, and gained, a great many more teachers—though it has not yet enough for the nursery classes, infants and juniors. Before long the county colleges will be coming along with a man-power bill of their own. The National Health Service wants more doctors and nurses. Social work of every kind is crying out for more people of character and talent. All this is in sharp competition for the best man-power with the needs of industry and commerce—the apparatus which supports the whole edifice of social welfare. There is a grave danger that at an extremely ticklish time too much of the nation's limited resources may be committed to social improvement and too little to the even more pressing task of social survival. At the moment it would seem more of a Christian duty, as well as plain commonsense, to concentrate on getting the schools themselves shipshape. We all know that education goes on after school and that often it is shockingly bad. The question is whether we can afford to attempt at this time anything more than the most important tasks and to concentrate on doing them well, without dispersal of effort. Because this is a time when social needs are on all consciences, it does not mean that unlimited resources exist to meet them. There is nothing un-Christian in facing the challenge of restricted means; we can only cut the social coat to the cloth available as sensibly as we can.

UNIVERSITIES CONGRESS

If the Commonwealth is viewed as a genuine society, with an underlying spiritual unity not unlike that of Europe in the Middle Ages, then the Sixth Congress of Universities of the Commonwealth, held at Oxford, July 19–23, can hardly be taken as less than the counterpart of Lambeth. Church, State and *Studium*—there is rightness still in the claim of the

Paris masters that the realm in which they ruled should be regarded as of equal dignity with those presided over by kings and bishops. Corporate bodies devoted to the pursuit of many-sided truth in freedom are vital parts of the good society. That the modern dictators have shown the same interest in corrupting universities to their purposes, as they have with their State systems and churches, is vindication enough of the Paris masters' claims.

The Congress discussions gave much unpleasant evidence that university freedom may be trifled with even in democratic societies. If New Zealand, under a Labour Government, seemed to stand out as the Dominion whose university with its four constituent colleges, enjoyed a degree of autonomy hardly distinguishable from that possessed, say, by Oxford or Cambridge, speakers from some other Dominions hinted at political pressure over appointments, petty unexamined complaints being carried to the parliamentary level, and a too utilitarian estimate by governments of what researches were worth supporting with public money. Sir Walter Moberly, chairman of the University Grants Committee, valuably outlined the happier experience of the United Kingdom. The Grants Committee's membership was primarily academic, it made block grants over a five-year period (i.e. not specifying closely on what the money should be spent), and it had behind it a national tradition favouring voluntary societies well understood by Ministers and senior civil servants who were often themselves *alumni*.

It would be dangerous, of course, to assume that these admirable arrangements are fixed for all time. As Dr. J. H. Mountford, the vice-chancellor of Liverpool University pointed out, the recently enlarged terms of reference of the University Grants Committee could be disastrously interpreted by a government so disposed, and there was no guarantee that the Committee's membership would continue to be acceptable. Further, the provincial universities depended for some of their money on the local education authorities. These were often firm believers in the saying that he who pays the piper calls the tune and sometimes showed signs of thinking that their contributions entitled

them to decide upon who should go to universities and even upon the courses they should pursue when they got there.

As Sir Walter Moberly said, there can be no unbreakable guarantee of academic autonomy. In the United Kingdom before the war one-third of university incomes came from Treasury grants, which has increased to two-thirds in the present quinquennium. Independence now depends entirely on the realization by governments and electorates that universities can pursue their proper functions only by being left free—in other words, that governments will get their money's worth from universities only when their money has had no strings tied to it. For governments to allow academic appointments to be made not by the judgment of scholars but according to the candidate's political record, or to finance research which they think socially desirable and to starve that which attracts good scholars, means abandoning the pursuit of truth.

Such conceptions are not easily understood by mass electorates. As Dr. N. A. M. MacKenzie, president of the University of British Columbia, said of Canada, governments tend to spend their money in ways popular with their supporters. The education of broad electorates in the true nature of universities is a task not to be despised by any Christian leaven. One way of spreading the true doctrine of universities about the Commonwealth was the chief business before the Congress. It is quite extraordinary that with the immense improvement in transport the mobility of academic persons within the Commonwealth should still be less than in medieval Europe. Yet for scholars to move frequently and easily, without fear of being forgotten in some remote college and not being recalled to a job at home, is one of the necessary means of keeping the Commonwealth a genuine society. A properly organized movement would mean, too, that strong figures from countries where university autonomy was jealously preserved would be able to do battle for it in backward territories where the need for it was not properly understood.

What of the spirit animating the Commonwealth Universities to-day? One morning was given to "A critical review

from the points of view of an historian, a philosopher and a sociologist, of the structural and moral changes produced in modern society by scientific and technological advance ". It was not a greatly stirring symposium. Professor J. Macmurray led off with a thesis familiar to readers of the News-Letter. " The primary function of universities is to act as cultural centres in our civilization. Their functions of teaching and research are secondary, and have significance only in terms of this primary function. In this primary task modern universities are failing disastrously. This failure is part of the breakdown of our cultural tradition." Professor A. Boyce Gibson, Melbourne, spoke of the failing hold of humanism which had been " linked . . . with the Christian respect for the immortal soul, and the high rationalist respect for the dignity of man as man ". Humanism was not being overthrown by science and technology, but by " a new philosophy of life—the philosophy of collective man ".

Unfortunately, as usual, the Congress was far better at diagnosis than cure. How to put new life into humanism, how to lay again the " moral basis for action " which Professor Raymond Firth thought was necessary—these were still unanswered questions at the end. The discussion developed into an examination of how general education might be fostered in universities. This is certainly a promising first step. If the scientist is brought out of his specialism to face some of the speculative problems of history, religion and philosophy he will at least be given the chance to notice that the world is not quite so tidy as his laboratory. If the arts student is made to look at the mathematics which Gibbon was so glad to set aside, there is a hope of broader minds at the controlling stations. Yet one must confess that a new and lively spirit in society, which will knit new activities to old wisdom, is not likely to spring out of changes in academic courses and curricula. It might seem disappointing that no more resulted from this quinquennial meeting of more than 300 delegates from over eighty university institutions. But universities are the head of the world, and if the world is confused, the head is likely to show it even more markedly than the rest of the body.

PROTESTANT OPPOSITION TO AMSTERDAM

By the time this News-Letter appears the Assembly of the World Council of Churches will be nearing its end. Meanwhile, some of our readers may have heard rumours of a "protest" assembly at Amsterdam. This has been organized by dissident groups in America, largely at the instigation of the Reverend Carl McIntire, a Bible Presbyterian who has been prominent in attacking both the Federal Council of Churches in America and the World Council from a point of view as "reactionary" politically as it is theologically. The former he has denounced as "communistic" as well as heretical.

The spirit of this dissident group is so contentious that it is hard to give it much attention. But it is a reminder that the difficulties which the World Council has to overcome proceed not only from Russia and from Rome, but also from some forms of Protestantism. This opposition is to be found among extremely conservative Evangelical groups in this country, but it is primarily in America that it is highly organized. Despite the efforts of a faithful minority, the Southern Baptist Convention, of six million members, has declined to join the World Council and the *Christian Century* has recently been commenting on a temper within Methodism which, despite its official allegiance to the World Council, is imperial rather than ecumenical.

Relations with these bodies must exercise the attention of the leaders of the Ecumenical Movement a great deal in the future. In dealing with Catholic opposition, the attitude of the hierarchy is ultimately decisive for the whole Church. That is not true of these Protestant bodies. There are many in these Churches who are ready to participate in the work of the Ecumenical Movement in those informal ways which are often of great value and it would be a pity if the hostility of their official spokesman led to their being lost sight of by the leaders of the World Council. No Churches need more that widening of horizons and prompting to self-criticism which participation in the Ecumenical Movement brings.

Daniel Jenkins

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MODERN WORLD VIEW—IV

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

BY H. A. HODGES

THOSE who undertake to interpret experience on the lines indicated in the preceding Supplement, in which we considered the problem of Theism, are faced at the outset by the great and complex problem of evil. Christianity has its own way of dealing with this, and we must now see what this way is.

THE CASE AGAINST GOD

The facts upon which the case against God is based are too well known to need detailed elaboration. Man lives in a world which moves by impersonal laws and is indifferent to the fortunes of life within it. Accident and disease bring pain, frustration, and death; calamity falls upon individuals and species, races and civilizations. In the realm of life itself there are beasts of prey and predatory instincts in others, and in mankind there is even worse, in the shape of moral evil. Neither the evils which befall men from the forces of nature nor those inflicted by other men are distributed according to desert. In particular it happens that what is morally best in us may contribute to our material downfall; and situations arise in which every course of action open to us is somehow unjust. This seems to make nonsense of moral standards altogether. Finally, the whole race of man lives under sentence of death at the hand of cosmic forces, through the law of entropy if not through anything else, and this makes the whole episode of life seem meaningless. This in brief is the indictment.

From this it is commonly inferred that God is lacking in either power or goodness. Most commonly it is His goodness which is denied. He has no care, it is said, for individuals, for communities, for moral principles, even for life itself. A shadow is cast over all optimism about the future of humanity, bewilderment and despair tend to set in. Personal religion becomes impossible because God seems both inaccessible and undesirable. From the doctrine of an indifferent God we slide further into pantheism or atheism.

Christianity resists these conclusions, of course, and it has several ways of dealing with them. But these ways are not all of equal value, nor all equally native to the Christian mode of thought. My present purpose therefore is to sift them from this point of view, so as to see what in them is distinctively Christian.

THE VIEW THAT EVIL IS UNREAL

The doctrine that evil is not a reality, but a kind of nothingness, though of pagan origin, has been adopted by Christian thinkers and has brought light and comfort to many. It is especially bound up with the Christian mystical tradition. It is not a religious doctrine, but a metaphysical one, and when properly understood it is not as absurd or as frivolous as it may seem at first sight. But, however sensible it may be, it is no real answer to the question in hand. For, let evil be ever so much a nothing, it remains a problem why God allows such a nothing to come in where we should expect something. To tell us what evil is is not to tell us that it does not exist, or that it is not evil.

IS GOD THE AUTHOR OF EVIL?

Much Christian teaching of all periods tries to save God's credit by limiting His responsibility, lifting at least the weight of moral evil off His shoulders. The possibility of moral perversion, which has become an actuality in our universe, is, they say, part of the price God and ourselves have to pay for human freedom and responsibility. God has deliberately limited His control over the actions of men, and in consequence He permits things to happen for which we alone, and not He, must bear the blame.

No doubt there is a sense in which it is blasphemy to say that God is the author of evil; yet it is also true that evil could not come into existence unless He granted it existence. And the distinction between God's doing a thing and His allowing it to happen will not avail for the purpose desired. For anyone who could prevent a thing from happening but does not do so must bear some responsibility for it when it happens; and if God freely brings into being a universe which He knows to contain the possibility of evil, He cannot disown a real responsibility for the evil when it materializes. There is no way out along this path. And indeed this theological explanation about the price

of human responsibility and freedom is not the only word that Christianity speaks on this question. Some passages in the Bible and some systems of theology take quite a different line. They ask us what right the clay has to give back answers to the potter, which means in prose that we are subordinated or even sacrificed, and justly so, to purposes greater than ourselves.

This view has a vertiginous attraction for some. It appeals to our capacity for self-abnegation, and also perhaps to a strain of masochism in us. But it needs careful handling. The whole to which we are subordinated or sacrificed must be of a higher order than ourselves, and the total system of nature, at any rate, is not so; which fact defeats the attempt to use the principle of the higher whole in terms of a pantheist Absolute. Such a higher whole can be conceived only in one of two ways. It may consist of beings higher in the scale of value than we; but such do not seem in fact to exist in any form that could profit by our sufferings. Or it may consist of ourselves in a higher state of being than we now enjoy, but one which can only be reached through our present struggles. This latter view also satisfies what seems to be a further requirement of justice, that we, as intelligent beings capable of intercourse with God, should not be used even for a higher end without being given a real chance to know it and accept it; for it implies a hereafter in which what is now obscure becomes plain.

THE "PETER WIMSEY" TYPE OF ARGUMENT

This is the Christian mode of argument, according to the model laid down by Christ Himself and reported in Mark xii. 26–7. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are dead; but God, Who is the God of the living, declares Himself their God; therefore, though dead, they yet live. God, that is to say, never lets go one with whom He has established a personal relationship; so that if He has so fashioned the world as to make it a vehicle for communication with all of us, His purpose must contain a future for all of us.

The argument is like that of a familiar type of detective-story plot, of which Miss Sayers' *Strong Poison* is a good example. We begin with Harriet Vane in the dock and a strong case against her. The police, having no prepossessions in her favour, argue

thus : all the known facts are against her, therefore she is guilty. Lord Peter Wimsey, who has a prepossession in her favour, argues thus : all the known facts are against her ; but she is not guilty ; therefore the known facts are not all the facts. And then he considers what the other facts must be, and seeks them out and finds them. So we find God arraigned on the strength of the facts of evil, and the world, not having any antecedent interest in God, argues thus : the facts are strongly against Him, therefore He is guilty, if He exists at all. We, who have the Abrahamic presupposition, argue thus : the known facts are strongly against Him ; but He is not guilty ; therefore the known facts are not all the facts. And we can infer in a general way what the missing facts must be.

This way of thinking, where we take empirical facts, confront them with our presupposition, and so infer other facts, is very characteristic of the Christian and Jewish mind. Thus, human beings die ; but human beings are brought into personal relation with God, and so acquire an absolute value ; therefore death is not the end of existence. Or again : the universe, being God's universe, supports and fulfils all that is best in our purposes ; but material goods are notoriously transient ; therefore material goods are not the main purpose of life, even here and now. Or again : human life is beset by injustice and failure, no society and no culture is free from grave evils ; therefore society and culture as we know them now are not the final achievement of mankind. Or again : the physical world as we now see it appears to be doomed to ultimate breakdown through the law of entropy; therefore this world is not the climax of creation.

In the Bible itself we find many similar cases of inference looking towards the future. There is an interesting one imputed to Abraham, which runs thus : Isaac is the child of promise ; but he is to die as a sacrificial victim ; therefore in some way he will rise from the dead (Hebrews xi. 17–19). This is from a Christian writer reading back his own ideas into an Old Testament story. But the Old Testament itself argues on the same principle. For instance, God has made covenant with Israel and will not go back from His word ; but Israel as a whole is not keeping the terms of the covenant ; therefore (*a*) Israel as a whole must be chastized, but (*b*) a Remnant shall always carry on the life of the

nation. In the Gospels we meet the argument: Jesus is the destined Victor over all evil; but it is plain that He is going to be put to death; therefore He will in some way triumph in and after His death. Later in the New Testament we find the old argument reapplied: the Church is in danger of destruction by her own corruption and by the powers of this world; but the Church is the Body of Christ and the vehicle of God's purpose for mankind; therefore the Harlot and the Beast will be destroyed, and the Bride enthroned. All apocalyptic and all eschatology arise in this way, from the confrontation of present fact with a metaphysical or religious presupposition, and the consequent inference to a better future.

The style of argument here described has, up to a point, the same logical form as the arguments of science. The scientist does not find natural law staring him in the face whenever he looks at the world. Quite the contrary. He finds apparent chaos and contingency. But he takes to himself the scientific presupposition, that everything is a case of a law, and fills in the gaps of his observations with inferred causes and inferred effects, just as Christianity comes to the world armed with the Abrahamic or at least the metaphysical presupposition, and amplifies the given facts of experience by adding others to complete the pattern. The difference is that, so far as our exposition has got, Christianity has not yet been shown to have any means of verifying its inferences, while the strength of science lies, of course, in the fact that it can do so. This is not to say that Christian beliefs are not, in their own way, brought to the test of empirical fact and sometimes transformed under its influence. How this comes about will appear later, in this and the following Supplement.

Meanwhile we must guard against taking the Peter Wimsey argument in a too facile way, as is often done both by ill-instructed Christians and by their opponents. The mistake lies in a misinterpretation of the Abrahamic presupposition. Inherent in that presupposition is the confident belief that, since man is called into intimate personal relations with God, and derives from this fact an unconditional value, man cannot fail ultimately to realize all that is worth while in him. The mistake lies in thinking that this guarantees the survival in perpetuity of human beings as they now are, and the final satisfaction of their

present hopes and aspirations. In short, it takes man as we find him now, and puts him and his values in the centre of the picture. The belief that Christianity invents its God and the rest of its supernatural apparatus for the sake of making people feel comfortable, of assuring them of security in this world and/or a continuance of their existing selves in another world, is very widespread. It is a just appraisement of the debased Christianity here described, but it cannot survive the analysis of how the mature Christian mind really works. For Abrahamic living involves a readiness to follow God's lead and to commit oneself to His guidance, in the knowledge that He will take us to an unknown land and change us pretty radically in the process. When we respond to His invitation, we do so knowing that we are saying goodbye to our present selves, and embarking on a course of self-transcendence no less than of self-preservation or self-development. It is time now to see what this involves more in detail.

ALL EVENTS ARE FROM GOD

God, we saw, must be conceived as governing nature and the course of events in time. In that case, all events proceed from Him, and all situations are His sending. This does not deny the reality of natural causes. But natural causes cannot operate except as they derive power and opportunity to do so from the First Cause; so that no amount of insistence on the inherent powers of the creature can alter the truth of our contention, that in the long run all events proceed from God.

Moreover, we saw that God must be held to direct the course of events in such a way as to guide and instruct us. History is a channel of communication between Him and ourselves. This differentiates Christianity at once from the religion of moral virtue which is so often substituted for it in popular belief. For the religion of moral virtue puts the point of contact between God and us in moral precepts, which are given to us by God through reason or revelation in a generalized form, and which we have only to apply to circumstances as they arise. The circumstances in themselves contribute nothing to the moral life, all that is moral (or religious) on this view lies in the general principles. And if, as is theoretically possible, we have studied these principles well enough to get a full understanding of what they

say, they are open to no further adjustment, and there is nothing more for history to teach us. Such is the standpoint of Greek ethics. But Christianity makes God the Giver not only of precepts, but also of the circumstances in which we have to act, and the living contact between Him and ourselves comes in the course of events, in the moment of action itself. For there a concrete relationship is established with things and people, which calls for constant new efforts of understanding and decision, and so yields constantly new insight into the meaning of the principles with which we started.

EVERY SITUATION A GOD-GIVEN OPPORTUNITY

The world's wisdom knows that every situation can be an opportunity. To the Christian, it is a God-given opportunity. It brings about a fresh relationship not only with things and people, as we have just said, but in and through them with God also. It is a confrontation and a challenge. Every power and every possession that is ours is God's gift, and therefore a responsibility. On the other hand, every duty is also His sending, and therefore a gift. For in our dealing with God there is no difference between gifts and demands ; everything that comes to us from Him is both at once. Every situation is a communication from God, bearing a threefold word. It is a word of command. It is a word of judgment, and the verdict depends on how we have taken the command. It is a word of promise, in that God gives us His commands not merely for His own good pleasure, but for the sake of making out of us something which we are not now and cannot yet conceive.

A life lived on these principles is new from moment to moment. The stability of achieved knowledge and perfected character, the aim of the pagan sage, cannot enter into it. The good pagan stands four-square against all assaults of fate. The Christian walks with God, moving forward to a goal which only his Guide can clearly see. He is a pilgrim and a sojourner in the world. His life is exploration and novelty, but exploration under guidance and novelty not created by him but given to him.

This peregrinal element in the Christian life is what is sometimes called its " experimental " character. It plays the part, we are told, in relation to the Christian faith, which experiment plays in relation to a scientific hypothesis. And no doubt to some

extent, and for some people, this is true. We may start with the metaphysical presupposition, and after consideration we may be brought by its inherent logic to a point at which we must make the venture of putting ourselves into God's hands. If we then do so, we find that the promised guidance does appear, that we are not left kicking our heels, or led round in circles, or carried off into a bog, but carried onward in a course which has direction and meaning, though we could not have plotted it for ourselves. The Christian assumption does verify itself in this way, though it is an experiment which only a life-time can fully work out, and in that respect quite unlike the slick laboratory technique with which we are invited to compare it.

Life lived on this basis gives a certain satisfaction indeed, but it is a little one-sided to speak without qualification of its giving "comfort". It roots up too many fixed habits of mind for that to be possible. The man who lives thus is not making use of God but being used by God, and remade all the time as he is used. Certainly, as we have said, the word is not only of command, nor only of judgment, but also of promise; but the promise is of gifts beyond our present conceiving, which are to be given to a man re-created. To the existing self it is the labour of a gradual death.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

At this point we can trace the rise of the famous triad of Christian virtues, faith, hope and love. *Faith* in this context must be understood in the sense which the word bears in St. Paul and the writer to the Hebrews, both of whom use (among others) the figure of Abraham to illustrate it. The key to the career of Abraham is his readiness to do without question whatever God invites him to do, and to believe the promises which come with the command, though with a minimum of explanation. With this readiness to take God's commands seriously is necessarily bound up the serious acceptance of God's promises for the future, i.e. faith implies *hope*. And both are characteristic of the attitude towards God which is Jewish first, and then Christian, in contradistinction to the Greek view of life. Greek wisdom does not know faith at all. It knows only belief or opinion, which is contrasted discreditably with knowledge; for knowledge is certain, safe, stable, while opinion is shifting, unreliable,

misleading. And Greek wisdom knows hope only as the deceiver, to which the sage must learn to shut his ears. A general atmosphere of frustration broods over the Greco-Roman world, and this is not unconnected with the abstractness of pagan philosophy, which finds in God an indifferent Source of Being, and tries to govern life on general moral principles, regarding this world as a prison and action as a sign of impotence. All this comes about because, in Hellenism, God is not effectively Lord of the world, not the master of history, and the guide and teacher of man. We see again, more clearly, how truly Moses reached a wisdom far beyond that of the pagans; for the Hebrew God is the Living God from the start and the Friend of man. In face of such a God, faith and hope are a duty.

In such intercourse arises also that generous self-devotion which is Christian love (*agape*). This also is characteristic of Christianity. Whether it is true, as some say, that the pagan world knew nothing of love in this sense at all, may well be doubted; but it is true that that world, in so far as it had a really personal religion at all, found its kernel chiefly in a movement of desire from man to God, the famous *eros*. This has also a place in Christianity, whatever some may say; but it is there to bring us to God, and when it has done that, the confrontation with God kindles the *agape* which dominates and disciplines *eros*.

In the theme of this present section we have for the first time in the course of this argument, reached a point of contact with the non-Christian thought of our age. The Marxist conception of dialectic is complex and has complex origins; but when Marxists say that action ought to be guided by dialectical thinking, they mean *inter alia* that we must not go by general principles, but by an understanding of the present and ever-changing situation in its wholeness. It is partly for not doing this that they attack "idealism", with which they class all religion. In dialectic so conceived are we not to see a recognition of that day-to-day character of man's life in this world, which Christianity also in fact recognizes? Are we to say that the Marxist is consciously repudiating the false god of the Greeks and unconsciously recognizing the true God Who is the Lord of history?

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